

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 118340

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118340

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK, HONG KONG,
LONDON FROM RANGOON JUN 15.

QUOTE RANGOON 1402.

E. O. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR BM

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: BNDD VISITORS

REF: BNDD HQS WASHDC 3567 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY:

MESSRS BELK, MCCLINTIC AND DICK VISITED RANGOON JUNE 12-14 AND
HAD TALKS WITH BURMESE OFFICIALS, UNDP RES RE P, BRITISH AMBASSADOR,
AND OFFICERS OF OTHER EMBASSIES. VISIT SERVED USEFUL DUAL PURPOSE
OF CONVEYING CURRENT US VIEWS ON INTERNATIONAL ATTACK ON DRUG
PROBLEM IN SEA AND INFORMING BNDD OFFICIALS OF RECENT BURMESE
ACTIONS, PROGRESS MADE, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER BRIEFING BY AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY NARCOTICS TEAM, VIS-
ITORS CALLED ON U PYI SOE, DIRECTOR, UN AND ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT,
FOREIGN MINISTRY (U KYAW, CHIEF OF UN DIVISION, WAS ONLY OTHER
GUB OFFICIAL PRESENT). FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS WERE COVERED:

A. IN RESPONSE TO BELK' S INQUIRY WHETHER GUB WOULD BE AGREEABLE
TO STATIONING BNDD AGENT IN BURMA, PYI SOE DID NOT ANSWER DIRECTLY.
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 118340

HE POINTEDLY IGNORED SUGGESTION BY BELK THAT AN AMERICAN MIGHT
VISIT POPPY GROWING AREA. WHEN DICK SUMMARIZED SNO ACHIEVEMENTS
IN NORTHERN THAILAND, NOTING INTENTION EXPAND PROGRAM, PYI SOE
EXPRESSED INTEREST BUT GAVE NO INDICATION THAT SNO EXPERIENCE

MIGHT IN ANY WAY BE UTILIZED IN GUB.

B. PYI SOE TOUCHED ONLY BRIEFLY ON POSSIBLE PROVISION BY US OF NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION EQUIPMENT, SAYING THAT MATTER MIGHT BE EXAMINED AND THAT IF ANY MATERIEL WERE PROVIDED IT WOULD BE PUT TO GOOD USE.

C. PYI SOE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR US INTELLIGENCE INFO ON NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING MADE AVAILABLE TO GUB AND ADMITTED THAT GUB HAD EARLIER BEEN UNAWARE OF EXTENT OF PROBLEM WITHIN BURMA. NEWS MEDIA AND LANZIN YOUTH LEAGUE WERE NOW RECTIFYING DEFICIENCY.

D. REFERRING TO GUB ATTEMPTS IN RECENT MONTHS TO INTEGRATE KKYS INTO BURMESE REGULAR FORCES, HE NOTED THAT SOME KKYS HAD GONE UNDERGROUND AND THAT BURMA ARMY WAS TAKING OFFENSIVE AGAINST THEM (RANGOON 1365). GUB GAVE LITTLE PUBLICITY TO ITS ACTIONS, BUT "OTHER PEOPLE DO SO AT THE OTHER END."

E. STATING THAT HE HAD RECEIVED GUIDANCE FROM BOTH FOREIGN MINISTER AND HOME MINISTER BEFORE MEETING, PYI SOE CONTINUED, "I HAVE BEEN TOLD TO ASSURE YOU THAT WE HAVE NO SHADY BUSINESS. WE WOULD NOT TOLERATE IT. WE HAVE NEVER WANTED OPIUM TO BE A SOURCE OF INCOME TO US." PYI SOE NOTED THAT OPIUM SMUGGLING AND INSURGENCY WITHIN BURMA AND ACROSS THE THAI BORDER WERE INEXTRICABLY INTERTWINED, AND REAFFIRMED GUB'S STRONG DESIRE TO STAMP OUT OPIUM SMUGGLING SINCE IT ONLY PROVIDED MORE ARMS AND AMMUNITION TO INSURGENTS. "IF YOU CAN CUT THE FINANCED LIFE-LINE IT DIES A SLOW DEATH". AT SAME TIME GUB DID NOT WISH TO ALIENATE ITS OWN PEOPLE BUT DESIRED MAINTAIN NATIONAL SOLIDARITY.

F. PYI SOE NOTED THAT SUB HAD AGREED TO UNFDAC PROJECT, AND WAS NOW DRAWING UP DETAILED PLANS.

G. BELK STRESSED HIGHEST PRIORITY PLACED BY PRESIDENT NIXON ON DEALING WITH DRUG PROBLEM, WHICH TRANSCENDED NATIONAL BOUNDARIES. HE URGED GUB COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONS TO EXTENT POSSIBLE, AND NOTED GUB HAD ALREADY TAKEN VARIOUS POSITIVE STEPS.

H. REGARDING THAI- BURMESE RELATIONS, PYI SOE SAID NE WIN'S RECENT VISIT TO THAILAND WAS A FACTOR IN IMPROVING ATMOSPHERE. HE INDICATED THAT FUTURE GUB- RTG TALKS WOULD DEAL WITH SPECIFIC NARCOTICS PROBLEMS, AND IMPLIED THAT ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE AN AGREEMENT FOR FORCES OF EACH COUNTRY TO ENTER TERRITORY OF THE OTHER FOR A DISTANCE OF UP TO 4 MILES IN CASES OF HOT PURSUIT OF
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PAGE 03 STATE 118340

INSURGENTS AND OPIUM TRAFFICKERS.

I. AT SAME TIME, PYI SOE TOOK USUAL BURMESE LINE THAT RELATIONS WITH THAIS WOULD BE FURTHER IMPROVED IF THAI SIDE DEMONSTRATED SINCERITY IN VARIOUS SPHERES. HE NOTED THAT THAIS NOW HAD PROBLEMS ON THEIR NORTHEAST BORDER, AND ACCORDINGLY APPEARED WILLING TO TRY TO REACH ACCOMMODATION WITH BURMESE SO THAT AT LEAST ONE PART OF THAI FRONTIER COULD BE QUIET.

J. IN GENERAL EXPLANATION OF BURMESE INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY STANCE, PYI SOE DEFENDED NEUTRALIST POSTURE ON BASIS IT HAD ENABLED COUNTRY TO PRESERVE ITS NATIONAL CHARACTER AND IDENTITY AND AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO VIETNAM CONFLICT. HE ASSERTED THAT THAILAND IN CONTRAST HAD BECOME SUBJECT TO VARIOUS UNDESIRABLE FOREIGN INFLUENCES. HE NOTED THAT HIGH THAI OFFICIALS HAD BEEN

INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS SMUGGLING, WHICH WAS NOT THE CASE IN BURMA.

K. WHEN BELK SOUNDED HIM OUT ON POSSIBILITY OF UN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DRUGS IN SEA VISITING BURMA, PYI SOE STATED THAT MATTER WOULD HAVE TO BE STUDIED. HE NOTED THAT INSURGENCY POSED A PROBLEM (IN TERMS OF VISITORS GOING INTO INSECURE AREAS).

L. IN REPLY TO BELK' S QUERY, PYI SOE STATED BURMESE ANNUAL OPIUM PRODUCTION VARIES BUT IS PROBABLY AROUND 500 TONS (WE DO NOT RECALL BURMESE OFFICIAL GIVING ANY ESTIMATE PREVIOUSLY ABOVE 400 TONS).

M. PYI SOE CLAIMED THAT NO NARCOTICS LEFT BURMA BY SEA (EVIDENTLY REFERRING TO RANGOON ONLY), NOTING THAT BURMA HAD ITS OWN SHIPPING LINE AND SHIPPING AGENCY AND THAT TIGHT CONTROLS EXISTED.

2. DURING CALL ON BRITISH AMB WILLAN AND FIRST SECRETARY RIGNEY, BELK SUMMARIZED OUTCOME OF JUNE 7-8 US- UK- HK DRUG MEETING IN HONG KONG, FOR WHICH WILLAN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION.

A. REGARDING CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSURGENCY AND NARCOTICS SMUGGLING IN BURMA AND THAILAND, WILLAN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD US WAS MAKING INTENSIVE INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS TO GAIN INFO ON TRAFFICKING PATTERNS AND TO INTERDICT MOVEMENTS OF NARCOTICS OUT OF BURMA INTO THAILAND AND LAOS, BUT POSED QUESTION WHETHER COMPARABLE EFFORTS WERE UNDER WAY TO DETECT AND PREVENT MOVEMENTS OF ARMS AND AMMO FROM THOSE TWO COUNTRIES INTO BURMA, WHERE THEY PROVIDED FUEL FOR INSURGENTS/ OPIUM SMUGGLERS TO CARRY ON THEIR ACTIVITIES. HE NOTED DIFFICULTIES IN DETECTING MOVEMENTS OF HEROIN AND MORPHINE, WHICH COULD BE EASILY CONCEALED, WHEREAS ARMS AND AMMO WERE BULKY AND MORE VISIBLE AND PRESUMABLY MUCH CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 118340

EASIER TO IDENTIFY AND SEIZE. BELK STATED MATTER WAS WORTH EXAMINATING.

B. REGARDING UNFDAC PROJECT IN BURMA, WILLAN EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT WHEN IT MATERIALIZED IT WOULD PROVE ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE, BUT THOUGHT VALUE LAY IN FACT THAT IT WOULD BE A FIRST STEP TOWARD ENGENDERING GREATER GUB COOPERATION AND OPENNESS IN NARCOTICS MATTERS.

3. IN CALL ON UNDP RESREP RANA, LATTER NOTED ZIG ZAG PATTERN OF GUB CONSIDERATION OF UNFDAC PROJECT SINCE SCHURMANN AND MARTENS VISITS, BUT EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT GUB HAS NOW GIVEN APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE, WITH SPECIFIC PROGRAM TO BE WORKED OUT FOR GUB AND UNDP AGREEMENT. RANA AGREED WITH BELK THAT INSURGENCY COULD POSE REAL PROBLEM FOR SUCCESS OF VARIOUS PROJECTS SINCE IF THEY WERE LOCATED TOO FAR FORWARD, WHERE THEY WERE NEEDED, THEY WOULD RUN RISK OF BEING OVERRUN BY INSURGENTS/ SMUGGLERS. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WAS ALSO ROOM FOR EFFECTIVE PROJECTS IN SECURE AREAS. HE TOUCHED ON IMPORTANT PROBLEM OF NEED TO CARRY ON PROJECTS IN AREAS WHERE DISAFFECTED MINORITIES WERE ALIENATED FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, AND WERE DISTRUSTFUL OF CROP SUBSTITUTION AND RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES WHICH GUB HAD ALREADY INITIATED ON LIMITED SCALE IN RECENT YEARS.

4. DINNER GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR OFFERED OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITORS TO HAVE FURTHER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH MFA AND UNDP OFFICIALS AND ALSO DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL REVENUE U SEIN HLA OO (PROBABLY BURMA' S LEADING NARCOTICS EXPERT) ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PROBLEM. LUNCHEON HOSTED BY DCM INCLUDED BRITISH, GERMAN, JAPANESE AND AUSTRALIAN EMBOFFS. LATTER NOTED RECENT VISIT TO RANGOON OF DAN SCULLION, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF BUREAU OF NARCOTICS IN CANBERRA, WHO ALSO SAW PYI SOE, AND HAD COMPARED NOTES WITH US.

5. COMMENT: VISIT WAS MOST USEFUL, SERVING TO REMIND GUB OFFICIALS OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF DRUG PROBLEM AND BRINGING THEM UP TO DATE ON US ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS. CALL ON BRITISH AMBASSADOR WAS EXPECIALLY TIMELY IN WAKE OF HONG KONG MEETING AND SERVED ADVANCE NOTICE ON BRITISH EMBASSY THAT IT WILL BE FURTHER INVOLVED IN US- US- HK COOPERATIVE MEASURES. UNDP RESREP, HERE ONLY EIGHT MONTHS, APPEARED TO WELCOME EXCHANGE OF IDEAS. FOR EMBASSY' S PART, WE WERE GLAD TO GIVE VISITORS RUNDOWN ON VARIOUS SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE ANTI- DRUG MEASUES INITIATED BY GUB AS REPORTED RECENT
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PAGE 05 STATE 118340

REFTELS.

6. THIS MESSAGE PREPARED AFTER BNDD OFFICIALS DEPARTED.
MARTIN
UNQUOTE ROGERS

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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